

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02087 071659Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5938
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2087

FOR EUR/EE AND INR/RSE

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, CZ
SUBJECT: TESITMONY ON EASTERN EUROPE BEFORE HIRC BY DAS LUERS

REF: STATE 194188

1. WE CONCUR IN POSITION OF EMBASSY MOSCOW (MOSCOW 18503)
THAT IT COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO PERMIT OVER-EXPOSURE
IN A PUBLIC FORUM OF OUR POLICY EFFORTS TO HELP EASTERN
EUROPEANS OBTAIN INCREASED INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIETS OVER
THE LONG HAUL. FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF PRAGUE, IT WOULD
APPEAR THIS MONTH'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET AMRED
INTERVENTION AGAINST DUBCEK WOULD HEIGHTEN THE EMOTIONAL
ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TESTIMONY ABOUT CZECHOSLOVAK DEVELOPMENTS
IN PARTICULAR WILL BE RECIEVED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. THUS,
WE WOULD HOPE THAT DISCUSSION OF US POLICIES TOWARD CZECHO-
SLVOAKIA WOULD BE CAREFULLY ARTICULATED.

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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 02087 071659Z

2. OUR PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCES WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA REMAIN
ROOTED IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONTROVERSY, TRAETMENT OF JOURNALISTS
AND PERENNIAL ANTI-U.S. MEDIA EMPHASIS. CLEARLY, THE HUMAN
RIGHTS SITUATION HERE IS NOT GOOD, BUT THE HUSAK REGIME
HAS SO FAR NOTABLY AVOIDED EMULATING THE SOVIETTS' POST-
BELGRADE TRIALS AND THE SENTENCING, FOR EXAMPLE, OF

SHCHARANSKY, GINSBERG, AND ORLOV. CONSTANT CZECHOSLOVAK PROCLAMATIONS OF FEALTY TO MOSCOW AROUSE REVULSION AND PITY, BUT WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE VIEWED ACROSS THE BACKGROUND OF WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN THE ONGOING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS AND THE PARTY-STATE LEADERSHIP. AT PRESENT, THAT CONFRONTATION IS A CAT AND MOUSE GAME, WHILE THE REGIME, WITH SUBTLE THREATS, WAITS TO SEE HOW FAR THE ACTIVISTS INTEND TO PUSH MATTERS AT THE TIME OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY.

3. SOVIET HEGEMONY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA -- HOME OF THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE -- APPEARS TO US STRONGER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN EASTERN EUROPE. SOME ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN, WE THINK, TO THIS SITUATION, ESPECIALLY INASMUCH AS TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE DEPLOYMENT OF SOVIET TROOPS HERE WHICH FORCED THE OUSTER OF THE POPULAR DUBCEK LEADERSHIP. BUT FOCUSING ON SOVIET PRESSURES FOR CONFORMISM SHOULD BE COMPLEMENTED BY SOME ATTENTION TO THE CONSPICUOUS LACK OF INITIATIVE BY THE HUSAK REGIME TO GAIN ELBOW ROOM FROM THE SOVIETS ON EITHER INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL POLICIES.

4. IN OUR VIEW, ENCOURAGING CZECHOSLOVAK INDEPENDENCE FROM THE USSR CURRENTLY APPEARS A MOST ELUSIVE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE COMPLETELY HOPELESS, IT BOTH SIDES BLOCK OFF POTENTIAL AVENUES TO INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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PAGE 03 PRAGUE 02087 071659Z

5. SINCE LUERS' TESTIMONY WILL BE VIEWED BY EE LEADERS AS A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT OF FUTURE US INTENTIONS, ESPECIALLY SO DURING CURRENT MEDIA COMMOTION OVER THE CONDUCT OF US FOREIGN POLICY, IT COULD HAVE A MARKED EFFECT ON OUR FUTURE ABILITY TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK AND OTHER EE GOVERNMENTS. IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA MAY PROPERLY HAVE A LOW PRIORITY IN OVERALL EE POLICY, BUT SHOULD NOT BE UNNECESSARILY UNDERMINED BY COMMENTARY BRANDING CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS AN UNREDEEMABLE CASE.
BYRNE

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